The Trinity, My Conclusions

Introduction

I am a former Oneness Pentecostal who has changed my views concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity. In the church where I was a member, we were taught that the Trinity Doctrine was false. This idea was programmed into the minds of the church members. Anyone venturing away from Oneness was labeled as a backslider, or even worst, an apostate. This put a fear into the people if they were to question anything they were taught concerning the Godhead.

Why I Changed by Beliefs

A debate on the John Ankerberg Show in 1985 between representatives of Oneness Pentecostalism and the Trinity Doctrine was the most influential event that helped me see what the Bible really reveals concerning the character and nature of God. Nathaniel Urshan and Robert Sabin of the United Pentecostal Church International (the largest Oneness denomination) debated Dr. Walter Martin and Calvin Beisner who represented Trinitarian theology. I made an audio tape of these programs and have listened to them a number of times over the years. Each time I have listened to them, I would pick up on some new piece of information. Using these programs as a basis, I studied other materials concerning the Trinity and have come to the conclusion that the Trinitarian Doctrine is correct.

The main reason why I changed my position is because of the scriptural evidence that supports the doctrine of the Trinity. It was the Bible itself that got me to change how I viewed the Godhead. I was not talked into it by anybody, or convinced by some reference book alone, but the Word of God opened my understanding.

My views concerning the Trinity were confirmed by conducting an objective unbiased study using reliable resources. When reading these references materials, they confirmed what I had concluded from reading the Bible.

It was the debate on the John Ankerberg Show that got my attention. At first, I strongly held on to the Oneness belief. However, as I studied further, God started working on me and revealing that He was truly One Being, existing as three distinct co-equal Persons.

Definitions:

**Trinity** = Within the nature of the One Eternal God there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The idea of the Trinity is that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct persons, co-equal persons that together (in union, joining) are God. They do not consider them to be separate beings or entities.

**Oneness** = Believes Jesus Christ was the Mighty God manifest in the flesh. That there is One Divine Person who has manifested Himself as Creator-God, and as the Lord Jesus Christ, and as the Spirit of God in the earth today for believers. It holds that the doctrine of the Trinity was a product of pagan mythology and Greek philosophy.
Another definition of Oneness is as follows. There is ONE GOD (Deut 6:4). The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are attributes, roles, manifestations, modes of activity, or relationships to man of the One True God. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost make up the person, or substance of God (Heb 1:3).

Oneness teaching denies that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have existed simultaneously as eternal collateral (parallel or corresponding) persons in the Godhead.

Oneness and the Trinity teachings agree on two points and disagree on the third.

1. There is but One God - DEUT 6:4
2. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is each God - 2 PET 1:17; JOHN 1:1,14; ACTS 5:3-4
3. Disagreement is on the point that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are distinct persons (separate persons). The use of the word "person" can be misleading because they are not using it to mean separate beings, but separate personality characteristics.

In regards to the Trinity, we use the term “Person” differently than we generally use it in everyday life. Therefore, it is often difficult to have a concrete definition of Person as we use it in regards to the Trinity. What we do not mean by Person is an “independent individual” in the sense that both I and another human are separate, independent individuals who can exist apart from one another.

When Oneness believers hear the word TRINITY, they are conditioned to think certain things such as:

- The term represents a belief in three Gods
- They turn their minds off from hearing Trinitarians explain their position
- It stirs up intolerance (refusal to objectively hear the arguments upon which the Trinity Doctrine is based)

Not every Oneness believer is like this but many are. Oneness Pentecostals believe that they are a privileged group of people, enjoying a special knowledge and special relationship with God. This way of thinking produces an “elitism” attitude. I know this is true because this is the way I used to think and many others have made this statement based on the testimonials I have read on the internet. I just ask Oneness believers to be patient and listen to the scriptural evidence with an open mind. There is no way that I can talk you into believing the Trinity Doctrine, God will have to reveal it to you through His Word. Please give it a chance because this is an important issue.

**History of Oneness Theology**

Oneness teaching has been labeled as a form of Sabellianism. Sabellius was a Christian priest and theologian from the 3rd century. He went to Rome and became the leader of those who accepted the doctrine of modalism and was excommunicated by the church in 220 A.D. God, he held, was one indivisible substance, but with three fundamental activities, or modes, appearing successively as the Father (the creator and lawgiver), as the Son (the redeemer), and as the Holy Spirit (the maker of life and the divine presence within men).
“The founding date of the Oneness Pentecostal movement can be traced to a specific event: a revival meeting in Los Angeles on April 15, 1913. The culmination of the meeting occurred when Canadian revivalist R.E. McAlister baptized converts not according to the Trinitarian formula of the historic Christian Church, but in the name of Jesus only. While many at the meeting were shocked by this action, evangelist Frank Ewart spent many hours with McAlister following the service and was converted to the practice. According to many Oneness Pentecostals, McAlister taught Ewart that baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, as stated in Acts 2:38, was the fulfillment of the Trinitarian creed in Matthew 28:19. The passage from Matthew is fulfilled because Jesus, the Son, is simply the ultimate expression of the monotheistic God (rather than the Son being a distinct Person within the Trinitarian Godhead).

The next significant date in the development of the movement occurred exactly two years later, on April 15, 1915, when Ewart gave his first sermon on Acts 2:38. Ewart did not actually develop his modalistic theology until after this sermon.

Also on this date, Ewart rebaptized supporter Glenn A. Cook according to the Jesus only formula; Cook then rebaptized Ewart. This was the beginning of the rebaptism of thousands of Pentecostals. The Oneness movement quickly spread through Pentecostal churches, particularly the Assemblies of God (AG). The AG debated the issue of baptism in Jesus’ name (called the New Issue) at their 1915 general assembly, and in 1916 defeated the movement in their denomination by requiring adherence to Trinitarian theology in the Statement of Fundamental Truths. 156 ministers subsequently left the AG to form an independent Oneness denomination. In January, 1918, the General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies merged with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, a denomination affiliated with the original Pentecostal revival on Azusa Street in Los Angeles.

A particularly significant event in the history of the Oneness Pentecostal movement occurred in 1945, when the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated, merged with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ to form the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI). Beginning with 617 churches in 1946, the UPCI currently has 25,283 churches with a membership of over 2.6 million.” (Quote from Jason Baker’s history of Oneness Pentecostalism)

As we can see, the early Sabellians and the forefathers of the modern Oneness movement were excommunicated for their unorthodox positions.

I was taught in my Oneness church that the origination of our church was not traced to one individual, but that it goes all the way back to the Day of Pentecostal to the book of Acts. In addition, my pastor said that the true way of salvation, as defined by Oneness Doctrine, went underground through the ages since the Counsel of Nicea in 325 A.D., until it came out in the open in the beginning of the 20th century. Based on the history I have presented, I hope you can see that this is just not the truth. A far cry from what we were taught. This is example of a misstatement of fact in order to promote Oneness theology.

The Counsel of Nicea

Oneness teaching says that at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., the truth of the oneness of God was done away with by mixing paganism with Christianity. In that council they say, they did away with baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the truth of the Oneness of the Godhead, and
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in its stead made the Godhead a trinity and the formula for baptism triune, “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

Oneness Pentecostalism teaches that the Trinity is a product of pagan mythology and Greek philosophy. What I discovered was the doctrine of the Trinity was based on what the Bible says concerning God. Even though the word “trinity” is not found in the Bible, the nature of the Trinity is revealed by the Bible. Many Christians believe in the “rapture,” but the word rapture does not appear in the Bible either. The word rapture was used to describe the event were Jesus Christ catches away His believers before God’s judgment is poured out on the world at His Second Coming. The word Trinity is used to describe what the Bible reveals concerning the character and nature of God.

Actually, the Council of Nicea was convened to establish that Jesus Christ is God and not something less than God. In the 4th century there was a movement called Arianism that became one of the most widespread heresies in the history of Christianity. It taught that the Son had not always existed; the Son or Word is a creature and a work, not the same in substance with the Father, and therefore not fully God. Athanasius championed orthodoxy by using Biblical arguments, not concepts of Greek philosophy, to establish Trinitarian theology. The Nicene Creed was adopted to fight against Arianism because they did not believe Jesus was God. So it can be said that the Counsel of Nicea helped to confirm the Deity of Christ and not to take away from it. History does not support the message that Oneness teaching promotes.

Scripture References

I will present several verses used by each side of the debate that are used in promoting their doctrine. From this point on, I will be referring back to these scriptures.

Oneness Doctrine:

- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD – Deut 6:4
- For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace – Isaiah 9:6
- I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. – Isaiah 42:8
- Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. – Isaiah 44:6
- I and my Father are one. – John 10:30
- For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. – Colossians 2:9

Trinity Doctrine:

- And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. – Gen 1:26
- Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. – Genesis 11:7
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- Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. – Isaiah 6:8
- Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: - Mathew 28:19
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. – John 1:1-3

As you can see from the scriptures used by Oneness theology, they reference God in the singular, such as using the personal pronoun “I”. In the Trinitarian scripture references, we see plural personal pronouns such as, “us” and “we.” The question that needs to be answered is, why does God use words in the plural form when speaking of Himself? That is, which model of the Godhead, Oneness or Trinity, fits in describing the nature of God. In answering this question, we need to focus on the body of evidence contained in scripture and not on people’s opinions. What does the Bible say concerning this question?

Points of Discussion

Let me state this at the beginning, I was on the Oneness side of the debate for a number of years. I understand the arguments of both sides concerning this issue. In my own life, I took a prayerful and objective scholarly approach in answering this question for myself. The following points are the ones that caused me to change my beliefs concerning the Trinity.

1. Trinitarians DO NOT believe there are THREE Gods.
2. Oneness teaching does not follow the rule of Bible interpretation that Old Testament scripture must be interpreted in light of New Testament scripture.
3. Oneness teaching ignores Granville Sharp’s 6th Rule of Greek Grammar when analyzing scriptures that mention the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
4. The Trinitarian model (One God/Being – 3 Persons) reconciles the singular and plural references to God.

I will elaborate on each of these points, referencing back to the scriptures I gave that are used in defending each position.

Three Gods

First of all, the Trinitarian Doctrine does not say that there are three Gods. If you look in any credible reference book, you will find that they believe in One Being or Divine Essence. Oneness authorities misrepresent the Trinity Doctrine by saying that they believe in three Gods. This misrepresentation is programmed into the minds of Oneness believers. Let me emphasize this, Trinitarians do not believe in three Gods. You may speak with people who attend a Trinitarian church, and the common layperson may say that there are three Gods. If they do, they are wrong and do not understand their own doctrine. In Oneness churches, there are believers who cannot correctly state their position either. On both sides of this issue, you cannot listen to uninformed comments by people who are not truly knowledgeable to speak on the behalf of that teaching. I am relying on the information provided by qualified representatives of each position, such as the participants in the John Ankerberg Show debate I mentioned earlier.
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The disagreement centers on the use of the word “Person” when defining the nature of God. What we end up with is an argument over semantics, or the study of the meaning of words. When Trinitarians use the word “person,” they are not using it in the same way as someone who would say, “John is a good person.” The word person, in this case, is used in reference to an individual. In using the word “Person” when speaking of God, we are speaking of a distinct personality or center of consciousness, not a separate being.

The word “Person” is used because scripture contains passages, such as Hebrews 1:5-8, where the Father is speaking to the Son. Since we have a conversation between the Father and the Son, the term “Person” is used to show that there is a distinction between the two. In other words, God is not talking to Himself as a human being may talk to himself. I am a husband and a father, these are roles/relationships I have with my family, but these roles (or modes) do not talk to each other. However, these distinctions exist with God. Please remember, His ways are higher than our ways. He is One Divine Being who is much more (as high as the heavens are above the earth) complex than a human being. The nature of His Being is such that He is One Being that has three distinct centers of consciousness (awareness). The existence of this form of dialog in the scriptures is referred to as the “I – Thou” relationship. This dialog shows that there is a distinction between the two that are speaking.

The Bible speaks of the Father as God (Philippians 1:2), Jesus as God (Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit as God (Acts 5:3-4). Deuteronomy 6:4 says that there is one God. The early church fathers had to conclude that somehow, these three Persons are One God. This is an example of how Trinitarian theology came about. The Trinity Doctrine did not come about as a product of Greek philosophy and pagan mythology. It came about by the evidence of scripture.

Let me try and explain the concept of the Trinity by using an example of a computer. In the early days of the personal computer (1980), they used an operating system called DOS (disk operating system). This is what made Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, a billionaire. On the early PCs running DOS, they could only run one software program at a time. If you were running a word processing program and wanted to work on an accounting program, you had to close down the work processor program and then start the accounting program in order to work with that software. When Windows was introduced, you could have more than one software program running at the same time. You could have the word processor, the accounting program, and a Bible program running all at the same time. This is called multi-tasking, or doing different operations all at the same time. All the software programs are running on one computer, but the computer is doing different functions, simultaneously. These are distinct functions operating on one computer, not three different computers. You could say a human being is like the DOS computer. They could only do one thing at a time. God is like a computer using the Windows operating system. He is able to do multi-tasking, such as hearing the prayers of a million people at the same time. This is way His ways are higher than our ways.

The Rule of Bible Interpretation

When studying the Bible, there is a common rule that we should follow. You always interpret the Old Testament in light of the New Testament because the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. After you lay the foundation in the New Testament, they you may proceed to the Old Testament to discuss it. The problem with Oneness Theology is that it starts with the Old Testament to define the character and nature of God. Even though the concept of
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the Trinity is not plainly declared in the Old Testament, that doesn’t mean it is not a spiritual truth.

In the debate on the John Ankerberg Show, the question was asked by Robert Sabin, “If God was a Trinity, why didn’t the Jews know it and worship Him as a Trinity?” We must remember that the Bible is progressive revelation. God reveals here a little, and there a little. In answering the question, one must realize that Abraham for example, lived in a world that practiced idolatry and the worship of many gods (polytheism). God revealed Himself to Abraham as the One true God. Monotheism, the worship of one God was not known to the ancient world and this is the concept that God was revealing to the Hebrews. At that point in time, God did not reveal that He was one personal God with three centers of consciousness. Jesus Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament and the Jews still missed it. Just because the Jewish people didn’t understand the distinction of God’s persons, does not mean it is not true.

In the debate on the John Ankerberg Show, the representatives of the Oneness movement emphasized that Isaiah 9:6 called the Son the “everlasting Father.” Their point being that Jesus is the father of Himself. The Trinity representatives stated that the Hebrew word for Father is “ab” which means originator or source. They maintain that the passage is referring to Jesus as the Father or “Originator of Eternity.” This is consistent with the Colossians 1:16-18 that says, “all things were created by him and for him.”

The word "Father" is merely the tool used to address Christ's deity, just as the word "Son" depicts His humanity. Moreover, the Hebrew word for Father “ab” is used in accordance with a custom in Hebrew and in Arabic, where he who possesses a thing is called the father of it. Thus Abialbon (II Samuel 23:31), "father of strength," means "strong"; Abiasaph (Exodus 6:24), "father of gathering," means "gatherer"; Abigail (I Chronicles 2:16), "father of exultation," is a woman's name meaning "exulting"; and so forth. Therefore, in keeping with the Hebrew custom the title "everlasting Father" or as it has also been translated, "Father of eternity," would simply be stating that Christ is eternal.

Robert Sabin asked Dr. Walter Martin in the debate, “You don’t believe that God can swirl about from Jehovah the Father, to Jehovah the Son, to Jehovah the Holy Ghost.” This type of question proves that Oneness does not believe that God exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, simultaneously, or all at the same time. This is why Oneness teaching is called a form of Sabellianism or modalism. The scriptures show that Jehovah (God) is called the Father (2 Peter 1:17), Jehovah is called the Son (John 1:1; 8:58), and Jehovah is called the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). For example, 2 Peter 1:17 says, “For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” If God swirls about from one mode to another, then how can you make sense of this passage. The only valid explanation is that in the Being of God, you have three distinctions or persons. The three Persons are One Jehovah. Now, whether you can understand how God does it or not is irrelevant. If he says He did it, then He did it. We should accept what the scriptures say about God.

An important scripture we should look at is John 1:1 which says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Greek word “Logos” was translated into English as “Word.” The definition of the word Logos (3056) from Strong’s Concordance is as follows:
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- A word, uttered by a living voice, embodies a conception or idea
- Its use as respect to the MIND alone
- In John, denotes the essential Word of God, Jesus Christ, the personal wisdom and power in union with God, his minister in creation and government of the universe, the cause of all the world's life both physical and ethical, which for the procurement of man's salvation put on human nature in the person of Jesus the Messiah, the second person in the Godhead, and shone forth conspicuously from His words and deeds.

Oneness theology interprets the Greek word Logos to mean that in the beginning, the Word was in the Mind and concept of God and was not a person. It was a plan in the mind of God for a future manifestation of Himself. This concept goes along with the first two definitions given for the word Logos. However, you must also look at the context of the passage and the words used with it to arrive at the proper meaning of what is being said. This is why there is a third definition that carries the idea of being in union with.

Trinity theology accepts the fact that the language of this passage shows a distinction. The preposition “pros” (4314) in the Greek, was translated to English as “with,” literally means “face to face with.” You cannot be face to face with mere concept or abstraction. You have to be face to face with a person. The use of the prepositions alone would indicate a distinction between God and the Word. This distinction in New Testament understanding is described by the use of the word “person.” You cannot be with, or face to face with an idea or plan. Scriptures such as John 1:1 is what the Trinity Doctrine is based upon. Again, this is not Greek philosophy or pagan mythology, this is the Word of God.

Granville Sharp’s 6th Rule of Greek Grammar

Another major proof that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are distinct persons is the analysis of the grammar used in the original Greek text. Granville Sharp’s 6th Rule of Greek Grammar says, “when nouns of the same case are joined by kai [and] and each noun is preceded by the article [the], the second noun expresses a different person, thing, or quality than the first noun.” The main scripture used in support of this rule is Matthew 28:19 which states, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Let’s put this in layman’s language. The presence of the article “the” before the three nouns, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, where they are all joined by the word “and” indicates there are three separate persons. The singular use of the word “name” implies that each has a separate name.

Oneness teaches that the name (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is Jesus. If this were true, the Greek text should have read, “in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,” leaving out the article “the” before the words Son and Holy Ghost. It has been pointed out by Greek scholars that this type of grammatical construction has been tested with no exceptions. The construction of the Greek in the New Testament follows the rules of Greek grammar. You cannot argue with the use of the Greek language.

In reading the Pauline epistles in the New Testament, you read in every one the same greeting, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here again we see the words “and” and “the.” Now, since we have gained an understanding Granville Sharp’s rule, we see that Paul is referring to separate persons. Why would Paul use this kind of
language if he wanted to prevent any misunderstanding concerning the Godhead. I believe that Paul had the revelation that God is One Being existing as three distinct Persons.

The Trinitarian Model

Finally, The Trinitarian model (One God/Being – 3 Persons) reconciles the singular and plural references to God. In the scripture references I gave earlier, there are passages in the Old Testament that use plural personal pronouns such as “we” and “our” when God is speaking. Since these Old Testament scriptures must be interpreted in light of the New Testament, such as Matthew 28:19, we must conclude that God is speaking in reference to His Persons in these Old Testament passages.

In the Bible, the use of singular and plural personal pronouns can be interpreted in this way:

- When God speaks in the singular (Deut 6:4; Isa 44:6; 45:5), He is speaking of His Deity
- When God speaks in using plural (Gen 1:26; 11:7; Isa 6:8) personal pronouns, He is speaking of His Persons

We must remember that we are using the New Testament to help interpret the Old.

Some Oneness believers have tried to say that plural passages are speaking based on the concept of Plurality of Majesty. This can be defined as a king referring to himself as “us” or “we” in an attempt to connect himself with God, giving him a divine authority. The problem with this argument is that this concept was unknown to the Jewish minds in the Old Testament. The concept of Plurality of Majesty was first used in 13th century Europe. Since God is God, He would not have to speak in the plural to connect Himself with God since He was God. So, the Plurality of majesty argument may sound good, it cannot apply in these passages.

The Trinity employs the concept of composite unity while Oneness employs the idea of solitary unity. The word composite here means “distinct parts.” Solitary means “single,” or “alone,” and is oneness that cannot be identified in distinct parts. It is an indivisible one. The Trinity does not divide God into three parts. The Bible is clear that all three Persons are each one hundred percent God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all fully God. For example, it says of Christ that “in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9). We should not think of God as being like a "pie" cut into three pieces, each piece representing a Person. This would make each Person less than fully God and thus not God at all. Rather, “the being of each Person is equal to the whole being of God.” The divine essence is not something that is divided between the three persons, but is fully in all three persons without being divided into "parts." Oneness is equating a person with a separate deity. This is not what the Trinity Doctrine is saying as was just stated.

In the King James Version (KJV) of the Old Testament, The word “God” was translated from several Hebrew words such as “El” (410) and “Elohim” (433). Elohim is translated as the word “God” 2,346 times in the KJV, more than any other Hebrew word. This plural noun in pagan usage signified plurality of gods. When used of Yahweh, it refers to the sole God of the world, who is addressed in the plural as the fullness of all deity. It is interesting that God would use a Hebrew word in the plural form concerning Himself.
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The name *Elohim* indicates that God is full of creating and governing power and who created all things by speaking His Word. This name of God is used 35 times in the account of creation (Genesis 1:1 – Genesis 2:4) and is the only word used to describe God in this passage. The very power of God’s Word brought all things into existence. Elohim is also used in Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our *God* (*Elohim*) is one LORD.” Here we have a plural noun in reference to a singular or one LORD (*Yahweh*). The conclusion your must reach is this, in some sense God is plural; yet He is also singular. From this we again see that the text of the Bible indicates that God is One Being with three distinctions in His nature.

The Danger of Heresy

In the early centuries of the Church Age, the formation of Christian doctrine was taking place. These early church fathers developed doctrines based on the understanding of scripture. In an attempt to stop the spread of heresies, the Nicean Creed, for example was adopted. Creeds are carefully considered and *usually* thoughtfully worded responses to various issues, heresies and historical situations that have troubled the Church and the world over the centuries. Creeds are statements of faith that are true and authoritative insofar as they accurately reflect what scripture teaches. Teachings conforming to established doctrine are called orthodox.

Any teaching that goes outside the orthodox doctrines of the church can be called a heresy. Some orthodox teachings include justification by faith, the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, just to name a few. There are teachings in Oneness churches that are within and outside of Christian orthodoxy. When groups take positions that are outside the orthodox positions of the church, that group is called a “cult.” The Oneness theology’s rejection of the Trinity is a denial of the true character and nature of God.

We must conclude, then, that the Oneness teaching is a heresy, that it denies a fundamental, basic belief of biblical Christianity, and that those churches and denominations which teach this heresy are actually pseudo-Christian sects. In popular Evangelical terminology, such a heretical sect is known as a "cult," a term which simply means that the group's beliefs are in some important respect non-Christian.

Six Points for Understanding the Trinity

Quote from “God/The Trinity,” Ankerberg Theological Research Institute. “In his *Christian Theology*, Christian theologian Millard J. Erickson offers six points that must be included in a proper understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity (the following is the authors’ paraphrase of Erickson’s points):

1. There is only one God

2. Each Person in the Godhead is equally deity.

3. The threeness and oneness of God constitute a paradox or an antinomy—merely an apparent contradiction, not a genuine one. This is because God’s threeness and oneness do not exist in the same respect; that is, they are not simultaneously affirming and denying the same thing at the same time and in the same manner. God’s oneness refers to the divine essence; His threeness to the plurality of persons.
4. The Trinity is eternal—there have always been three Persons, each of whom is eternally divine. One or more of the Persons did not come into being at a point in time or at some point in time became divine. There has never been any change in the essential divine nature of the triune God. God is, and God will be what God has always been forever.

5. The function of one member in the Trinity may for a time be subordinate to one or both of the other members, although this does not mean that that member is in any way inferior in essence to the others. Each Person of the Trinity has had, for a period of time, a particular function unique to Himself. In other words, the particular function that is sometimes unique to a given Person in the Trinity is only a temporary role exercised for a given purpose. It does not represent a change in His status or essence. When the second Person of the Trinity incarnated and became Jesus Christ, He did not become less than the Father in essence, although He did become subordinate to the Father functionally. In like manner, the Holy Spirit is now subordinated to the ministry of the Son (John 14-16) and to the will of the Father, but He is not less than they are. Certain examples may illustrate this. A wife may have a subordinate role to a husband, but she is also his equal. Equals in some business enterprise may elect one of their number to serve as head or a chairperson for a period, without any change in rank. During World War II, the highest ranking member of an aircraft, the pilot, would nevertheless carefully subordinate his decisions to the bombardier, a lower ranking officer.

6. Finally, the Trinity is incomprehensible. Even when we are in heaven and fully redeemed, we will still not totally comprehend God, because it is impossible that a finite creature could ever comprehend an infinite being. Thus, "Those aspects of God which we never fully comprehend should be regarded as mysteries that go beyond our reason rather than as paradoxes which conflict with reason." 3.

Final Comments

In conclusion, I would like to summarize the comments I have made. First of all, Trinitarians do not believe that there are three Gods. Church leaders in the Oneness movement have misrepresented the beliefs of Christians in Trinitarian churches. Second, the Trinity Doctrine is not a product of Greek philosophy and pagan mythology. It was formulated by the careful study of the scriptures, interpreting Old Testament passages in light of the New Testament, accepting the language used in the text, and by following the rules of Greek grammar in allowing the scriptures to speak for themselves. Thirdly, the Trinitarian model fits both the singular and plural reference to God. God is One Being, but there is a threeness to His nature. 1 John 5:7 says it this way, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (KJV). I have shown that Oneness theology has distorted history and misled its followers.

These are the reasons why I no longer believe in the teachings of Oneness Pentecostalism. I didn’t come to this decision overnight. It took a lot of prayerful study and meditation on the Word to come to these conclusions for myself. I don’t want to put stress and worry on you if you believe in the Oneness teaching. I feel it is my responsibility as a Christian to warn those who are getting off course when it comes to understanding the Bible. I would hope that someone would love me enough as a Christian to warn me if I was getting off the mark. I hope this message gives you an increased awareness of what the Bible says concerning the nature of God.
This may be hard for many of you Oneness Pentecostals to take, but what is more important, being close minded about your beliefs or open minded to truths that are revealed by the Holy Ghost concerning the Word of God. I want to align my beliefs with the Bible, not force the Bible to fit the way I want to believe. When I first came to be a Christian, I was a babe, unskillful in the scriptures. As I became more knowledgeable of the Word of God, I became a mature Christian and able to think for myself. As I grew in the Lord, I was able to form my beliefs based on what the Word said and not on what somebody told me the Word said.

God bless you!

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